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THE
ADVOCATE OF PEACE,
AND UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD.

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EIGHTEENTH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE
AMERICAN PEACE SOCIETY.

[Reported for the Advocate by Thomas Drew, Jr.]

The Eighteenth Anniversary of the American Peace Society was celebrated in the Central Church, Winter St., Boston, on Monday evening, May 25th.; SAMUEL E. COUES, Esq., President, in the Chair.

The meeting was opened by the reading of the Scriptures, and prayer from the Rev. Dr. Sharp, of Boston; after which the Corresponding Secretary, Rev. Mr. Beckwith, read extracts from his annual report to the Society, showing the doings of the past year.

The following resolutions were then read by Mr. Beckwith.

Resolved, That the events of the last year illustrate the success of past labors in the cause of peace, and the necessity of their continuance and large increase.

2. That our warmest gratitude is due to our common Father in heaven for the continuance of peace, amid so many alarms of war between this country and Great Britain.

3. That we view with a degree of surprise bordering on horror, the very thought of war, for any cause, between two such nations, claiming a common origin, speaking one language, professing the same religion of peace and love, banded together so long in efforts for its spread through-

out the world, and bound to each other by a thousand ties of reciprocal duty, affection and interest.

4. That we have hailed with pleasure and hope, the disposition manifested, especially by the people of England and America, in their interchange during the year of friendly addresses, pleading for the continuance of peace, and remonstrating against war on account of the pending controversy.

5. That these developments of popular feeling on the subject are full of hope for the future, and prove that the people of Christendom hold in their hands a moral power sufficient, under God, to prevent, if used aright, the recurrence of war through all coming time.

6. That peace, the offspring of Christianity, and the nurse of intelligence, freedom, and virtue, of science and art, of manufactures and commerce, of religion, and all the philanthropic enterprises now in progress for the world's improvement and redemption, is the first great want of the age, and ought to be zealously sought by every one that loves God, his country, or his species.

7. That the cause of peace is eminently practical, appealing to every man's interests, conforming to the dictates of common sense, and simply asking nations to settle their difficulties as individuals in well regulated society do theirs, without the effusion of blood, either by amicable agreement between themselves, or by some mode of reference to competent and impartial arbiters.

8. That the general adoption by governments of such substitutes as their common settled policy, would ere long obviate all occasion or necessity for international war through the civilized world.

9. That passing events conspire to enforce upon governments the obligation of introducing such policy as a pledge under God for their permanent peace.

10. That we deeply lament, not only the actual collision of our Republic with that of Mexico, but also the outbursts of the war spirit in so many parts of our land, and the obvious, deplorable tendency of the existing war excitement to demoralize, more or less, the general mind of the nation, especially the lower classes and the rising generation.

11. That all good men should repudiate the doctrine which requires us to support our government, right or wrong, in any war it may choose to undertake; and he who aids or sanctions any war which he deems wrong, becomes confederate with its crimes, and violates the plainest precepts of Christianity, and of common morality.

12. That we acknowledge with great pleasure the very general co-operation of the press and the pulpit through the country the past year, to plead for its continued peace, and impress the public mind with the wickedness and manifold evils of war.

13. That the thanks of the country are due to those statesmen who have on the floor of Congress lifted their voice in favor of peace as alike the duty and interest of our country.

These resolutions having been read, the Secretary invited Dr. SHARP, who he said was a native of the country with which, during the past year, there had been apprehension of a conflict, to address the meeting upon the resolutions, which were subsequently adopted.

Dr. S. was pleased to hear that the Society was in so prosperous a condition. Its objects should be more generally known; we should advocate the claims of peace in the spirit of peace, and, if he might use a military phrase, we should all stand in this cause, however differing in opinion, "shoulder to shoulder." Some twelve months ago he had visited, after an absence of 40 years, the land of his fathers; and while there the question of peace and war came up in consequence of the tone of the President's Message. And not a gentleman did he meet with, though he mingled with all classes, but deprecated war in the strongest terms. The public sentiment of the people of England was against war; they desired Peace.

AMASA WALKER, of North Brookfield, then took the floor. Never, said he, have the friends of peace assembled under more favorable auspices than on this occasion. This may seem startling to some, when the news is hawked about the streets this very hour of the slaughter of 1200 Mexicans upon the battle field by the soldiers of the United States; and when, as they came to the meeting, they had beheld the illumination of the office of that paper which first obtained the news of what is called a "glorious victory." O, if we could look into that other world, what an illumination should we behold there, too, and what rejoicings among the fiends below!

Never has there been such a gathering before, upon any meeting of this society; and in spite of those terrible events which have recently transpired upon our borders, he believed that an overruling Providence would shape all things for good. He should have nothing to say about this Mexican war. It was as fair a war as he ever read of; all wars are alike; and what difference does it make in regard to the question of humanity, whether we have a Mexican war, an Indian war, or any other kind of a war? Those Mexicans who perished in the recent battles, had the same ties to bind them to life; they were fathers, husbands, brothers, and sons, and had wives, sisters, and mothers who loved them living, and mourned for them, dead. We peace men can make no distinction; we are not traitors to our country, or blue light federalists; we will not maintain arguments upon this or that question of war; but we go against *all* war, for whatever purpose or under whatever pretext; and here is our advantage over those who justify war in certain cases. The present year had marked an era in the Peace cause. On the 4th of July, last year

an address was delivered before the authorities of this city which had produced such an excitement as no other ever did. That excellent address crossed the Atlantic; it was re-published there, and extracts in the form of tracts had been scattered far and wide. The newspapers gave publicity to its noble sentiments; and every publication that is brought into this country, is telling of the good which that production has done and is doing.

The idea of enlisting the conductors of the public press in the cause of peace, had been successfully carried out by our friend, Mr. Burritt, through the medium of his "Olive Leaves." The plan was simply this—having written a short article on the subject of peace, he would have it printed upon from 500 to 1500 slips of paper, and sent to every newspaper in the United States, with the request that they would send him a copy, if thought worthy of publication. He knew not how many papers had copied these slips, but he felt safe in asserting that the average number which copied each article was over 200. These Olive Leaves had crossed the Atlantic, too, and the last mail from England brought quite a file of English papers, containing the Olive Leaves of Peace, which our friend from Worcester had sent across the ocean, as messengers of peace and amity. The Bond of Brotherhood was a new publication devoted to the cause, and was calculated to do immense good; by furnishing them to the passengers on the Railroads, many minds would be reached. 10,000 of the first and second numbers had been circulated in this way, and 20,000 of the third and fourth numbers were now prepared for circulation, and all this was being done by individual enterprise, aside from the good which was being achieved by the society.

But the intelligence we have received from England is still more encouraging. The people there begin to think that there is not much substance in "*glory*" after all. They begin to learn the great fact, that it takes one half of all that they can earn to pay the interest upon the "*Glo-ry bills*" of past times; and they begin to think that *bread* is better than glory. In that country the greatest change has taken place in public sentiment. There people won't enlist, and when the Government proposed to enroll 40,000 men for the army by a draft, what did the people do? Why they assembled in great meetings, and they resolved that it was sinful to fight; they resolved that they would not fight. And they formed clubs pledged to support the families of such as would suffer imprisonment rather than join the army; and the consequence has been, that the voice of the people has compelled the government to give way and abandon the idea altogether.

The Friendly International Addresses, is another great feature in the

peace operations of the past year. You may read Hume, and Gibbon, and Allison even; but where in all the histories of past time, can you find any such movement, in behalf of peace and universal brotherhood, as is exhibited by these Friendly International Addresses? Here is one, said he, (holding it up to the audience) from Old England's Worcester to New England's Worcester, signed by 630 of its inhabitants, received by the last steamer. I need not say to you, that the response to it will be a warm one. Here is another signed by 1548 of the citizens of Exeter, sent as a friendly greeting to their brethren in Cincinnati, Ohio, in behalf of Peace and friendship, and another from the citizens of Edinburgh to the citizens of Washington; and among the signers you can see the name of the venerable Thomas Chalmers. But, continued Mr. W., here is one which, when you have learned what it is, and from whom it comes, you will receive with a most cordial welcome. It comes from the Women of Exeter, Old England, to the Women of Philadelphia, and the United States generally, and is signed by the names of 1630 of England's daughters, from every rank and condition in life, and it appeals to you thus—"Friends and Sisters." (Great applause.)

I believe this meeting will be willing to bear me out in the statement with which I begun, that the cause of peace is making good progress. When the men who have been prompt to answer the calls of the recruiting officer, begin to talk of conscientious scruples, you may rest assured that the days of war are numbered.

ELIHU BURRITT then took the floor, and said, This is truly an age of progress. The periods of *offensive* war have passed down the currents of oblivion. Napoleon himself, as he reviewed his bloody career, when all those terrible crimes and calamities that he had brought upon the world, came up before his vision, in the last hours of his life, declared that he never waged any other than a *defensive* war.

The time has been predicted when the lion should lie down with the lamb. My friends, the lamb has lain down in the very claws of the lion. Pagan nations have long since ceased to fight. Upon the banks of the Sutlej, England has given us a terrible example of a *defensive* war, and its slaughters there have given occasion for a universal warwhoop of gratitude through the English churches. France has waged defensive war in Algeria, and now young Evangelical America wages *defensive* war with weakened and distracted Mexico. And in view of these things what hope have we for the extermination of these horrors, if we cannot find some argument against them this side of Heaven? What can we do? If the Bible does not condemn all war; if you turn us out of the New Testament, where can we go? The highest seraph that basks in

the radiance that surrounds God's throne, can have no higher gospel than this, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself;" and upon this gospel we plant ourselves.

Even the revelations of commerce prohibit war; and shall the religion of the Ledger outweigh the religion of Jesus Christ? If that religion will admit any defensive war, our hopes are extinguished forever; for the last words of the author of it were, "it is finished." Nothing can be added, and nothing taken away. Let the human race come to this sacred volume for their guidance, and read its prohibitions against *all* war. It may be imputed to fanaticism and ultraism, but it has come to this: that if the gospel forbids all war, then there never was, and there never will be, a period when its demands were more imperative than now. The greatest prerogative conferred upon us this side of heaven, is to dwell together in love, and have God dwelling with us. And in view of this, the apostle exclaimed, "That neither principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, could separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

And we do say that a Christian can have no part in God, or God in him, in the act of taking the life of a fellow man upon the battle field. If any war can be consistent with Christianity, cannot a war consist of Christianity? and should not Christians be set apart for this terrible duty? It is awful enough to be sent to the bar of God without preparation; it is a painful thing to be sent thither, even with the love of Christ in our hearts. But, my friends, the act of dying with murder on our hands, with our souls filled with all the vengeful passions that war engenders, cannot qualify us for the society of the angels in heaven or the company of just men made perfect, in that blest world beyond the grave.

The whole world is looking to Christianity for the continuance of the blessings of peace. The down-trodden millions who have been crushed under the burdens of the grim Moloch of war, and are lifting up their lean, shrivelled hands, and crying for bread, are looking to us Christians, imploringly, to stay the awful devastations of war; that they may have opportunity to rise again to the dignity of manhood. And it is for us to remember, that if we perforate the great law of love, which is to cement and bind together in harmony all races of men, even with so much as a bodkin, we make a hole large enough to admit all the fiends of the pit and deluge with blood the whole face of this beautiful green earth. The speaker illustrated his position, that it would not do to fall short the breadth of a hair upon this question of war from the standard of requirements laid down in the gospel, by an anecdote of thrilling interest;

holding the audience in that state of breathless suspense which renders even a whisper audible. He concluded by declaring his belief that the great radical defect of the times, was a want of faith in God and in humanity. O! stupendous delusions are these defensive wars! Tell me if there can be any moral distinction, or if there can be any more of Christ's spirit manifested in a *defensive* war than any other?

Rev. Mr. HOLLAND, of Rochester, next addressed the meeting. His views were the same as those of the last speaker. He had just come from attendance upon the anniversaries in New York. During the last week he had attended a meeting of the Bible Society, and the speakers, being called on to state their views in regard to the pacific character of the gospel, the very first who spoke, declared in the outset of his remarks, that the gospel enjoined upon all men to "maintain their rights." Mr. H. spoke of the importance of the preservation of peace to the Missionary cause, that without peace we could not hope to meet the flood of heathenism which covered the whole earth. The gospel of Christ was eminently a gospel of peace, and he should say, that if it was ever to be circulated by force of arms, or if its requirements were to be fulfilled in such a manner, it could not be the pure, real, genuine gospel, that Christ gave, but a maimed, lame, spurious edition. He deeply deplored the out-breaking anew of the military spirit, that the blessed dove of Peace had been frightened away from our borders, and that

"The fierce grey bird with a bending beak,"

was made the motto of a Christian life.

Dr. WALTER CHANNING followed Mr. H. He appealed to the audience as Christian men and women, to do their duty, at this time, to their Christianity and their country. If they had no duty to discharge, then he had nothing to say; if they had *done* their duty, then all was accomplished that could be asked. He believed there was a great duty to perform; though we should lose reputation, station, the good will of the world. Christianity and humanity demanded that we should be faithful to our obligations, and God would approve. There was a "still small voice" within, which he believed was the requirement of humanity, urging us to the discharge of our duty; we should be guided by this voice, leaving the result to a higher source.

A gentleman in the gallery next made a few remarks which were interpreted to be in favor of war as a means used by God in the accomplishment of his purposes,—and was followed by STEPHEN S. FOSTER, who said that he did not agree with all the sentiments advanced, nor with all the resolutions. He could not agree with the report of the Secretary, in praise of the American pulpit, or the American press. Peace men

should "utter the truth in love," but they should utter the *truth*. The report of the Secretary had commended the pulpit and the press for their efforts in the cause of Peace. He could see nothing to commend them for. Another speaker had alluded to the influence and effects upon the cause, of the oration delivered in this city on the 4th of July last; and in view of that fact he would ask where are the clergy? Should he be asked to accord them praise as a body when the efforts of an humble member of the legal profession had done more to advance the principles of peace and extend a knowledge of peace principles, than the 30,000 clergyman whose sole duty it was to be first and foremost in this great work? Are we not plunged into a war; one too, that might have been prevented? Has not the news just reached us of the wholesale murder, (for it is nothing but murder) in Mexico? And how does the pulpit and the press receive it? Why one of the printing offices boasting the largest circulation of any in the state is illuminated to-night in honor of the butchery of 1200 Mexican fathers and husbands. And where are the American ministers, save with few exceptions, that had dared to speak out in condemnation of this war? This society has yet to speak out and utter its protest against it. He wished Massachusetts, at least, should stand aloof from all participation in its atrocities, and he hoped that action would be taken to-night, that this Society should do as the peace societies had done in England, stand between the government and the people; and do all in its power to prevent them from enlisting in the army. Now was the time for the society to act: and he hoped it would direct its energies to keeping our own state aloof from the iniquity. 1500 men had been called for from this State; every man was liable to be drafted, and marched into Mexico, to fight in this abominable war. The people were told that it was treason to the country not to sustain it, but will Massachusetts give her voice in favor of it? (cries of No! No! one or two, of Yes!) We are culpable if we do. At the day of judgment, Gen. Taylor will excuse himself by declaring that he invaded Mexico by order of the President. Who is James K. Polk? and who are they that sustain him in such high-handed outrages against the people of a sister republic? Let us be free from the blame, and let us come here to-morrow, and unite in a strong and energetic course, and we may yet prevent this State, at least, from plunging into this war.—Some fields were not worth cultivating, but let us take care of Massachusetts.

The hour being late, an adjournment was moved, and the audience retired, apparently much gratified with the exercises of the evening.